

Patrick McManus House
710 Main Street
Alexandria
Huntingdon County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5393

HABS
PA.
31-ALEX,
18-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PATRICK McMANUS HOUSE

HABS No. PA-S393

Location: 710 Main St., Alexandria, Porter Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: John L. Miller, Jr.

Present Use: Single-family dwelling.

Significance: The Patrick McManus House is one of numerous buildings in Alexandria constructed of log, although it is now distinguished by exterior horizontal wood cladding. The house, which may have served for a short time as a tavern during the borough's early days, was occupied by the Piper family for more than 100 years.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. or before 1829. The house appears on the Hartslog Heritage Map of 1835; Patrick McManus, presumably the original owner, deeded the "2 story log house" to John Cresswell in 1833. McManus acquired the property in 1829.

2. Original and subsequent owners: The gable-end house has a 60' north frontage on Main Street and extends back 180'. It is bounded on the east by another lot and on the west by the borough boundary.

The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds Office of the County of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

1829 Deed November 19, 1829, recorded in Volume W1, Page 308.

James Trimble
TO
Patrick McManus.

1833 Deed November 16, 1833, recorded in Sheriffs Deed Book 1, Page 172.

Patrick McManus
TO
Jacob Cresswell.

1833-34 Jacob Cresswell Jr. and his wife deeded the land to John Piper (Harshbarger, notes), although no such document was located. According to the 1904 deed, John Piper bequeathed the lot to his children by will.

1904 Deed June 1, 1904, recorded in Volume Z4, Page 572.
Nicholas Piper, et al.
TO
Julia Piper.

1904-47 House passed by will among members of the Piper family (Julia Piper to Edwin Piper, Edwin Piper to W.C. Piper).

1947 Deed May 1, 1947, recorded in Volume L8, Page 367.
W.C. Piper, et al.
TO
Elma C. Miller.

1980 Deed July 24, 1980, recorded in Volume 157, Page 569.
Elma Miller
TO
John L. Miller, Jr.

3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located. From inspection of the present-day fabric, however, this was probably built as a gable-end, two-story, three-bay log house. The house was originally a side-hall plan having two rooms on east side of the hall; the front rooms were used as a living room/parlor, and the back rooms as a parlor/dining room. The second story consisted of bedrooms.
4. Alterations and additions: The house was most likely constructed in two phases: Construction of the main, three-bay block was followed by the addition of the two west bays, which are about two-thirds the depth of the original. The gable roof and gable-end wall is the full depth, however, creating a recess that originally contained a second-story porch (no longer extant). This is supported by the fenestration pattern on the main facade, whereby a greater amount of unbroken wall space exists on each side of the original three bays.

- B. Historical Context: The McManus House was constructed by 1829 by Patrick McManus, one of the early citizens of Alexandria who settled on the "Trimble Addition"--that section of town laid out by Dr. James Trimble in the late 1820s.

John Piper moved into the dwelling, cited in deeds as a two-story log weatherboarded house, approximately five years after its construction. A cabinet-maker and carpenter, he took up residency by 1834 and remained there for seventy years. (Africa, 427). Piper reportedly had a shop next to the log house from at least 1855 until at least 1875, and it was gone by 1900 (Harshbarger, 39, 53, 63).

Born in 1799, Piper was active in the Alexandria community throughout his life, including his election to school director in 1861. Like other members of his family, Piper worshipped at Christ's Reformed Church of Alexandria (Africa, 418, 434). Upon Piper's death, sometime after 1875, his children inherited the property.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: One of the earliest buildings erected on the Trimble Addition to the westernmost edge of Alexandria Borough, this was a typical early nineteenth-century, two-story log dwelling.
2. Condition of the fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 43' x 24'.
2. Foundations: Stone and brick.
3. Wall construction: Log with horizontal wood siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing log walls.
5. Porches: The entrance porch consists of four wood steps leading to the door with a shoddy, modern wood handrail.
6. Chimneys: A single ridge chimney near the east gable end.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front door is six-paneled wood with a four-light transom; the casing is simple wood. Two wood doors are located off the rear facade.
 - b. Windows: One-over-one-light and six-over-six-light double-hung wood sash, each covered by a one-over-one-light modern storm. The shutters have been removed.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Side gable with asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Plain wood box cornice.

C. Site:

1. General setting: The Patrick McManus House is located on the westernmost edge of Alexandria. Residences lie to the east and north; west is the borough boundary, beyond which is a stream; south lies an expansive yard, beyond

which are planted fields.

2. Outbuildings: Approximately 10' south of the southeast corner of the house is a small woodshed, possibly dating to the 1820s, which could have been moved from another location. A free-standing sheet-metal shed is situated a few feet from the southwest corner of the house.
3. Landscaping, enclosures: A brick path runs the length of the east facade.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old views (in Hartslog Heritage, 27).

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Porter Township tax records, 1819 to 1859, Huntingdon County Historical Society.

Alexandria Borough tax records, 1859 to 1873, Huntingdon County Historical Society and Huntingdon County Courthouse.

Huntingdon County Deed Books and Probate Records, Huntingdon County Courthouse, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

Huntingdon County Tax Map -- Alexandria, 01-01-42.

Huntingdon County Historical Society survey sheets.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Africa, J. Simpson. History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883.

Harshbarger, Jean P., Nancy R. Taylor, Sara H. Zabriskie, and F.R. Zabriskie. Hartslog Heritage. State College, Pennsylvania: K-B Offset Printing, Inc., 1975.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Karen Genskow, Sangamon State University. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Alexandria, an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Saltsburg (Indiana County) and an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).